

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 OIC-02 AF-08 EA-07 NEA-10

CIAE-00 CU-02 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 PA-01 /075 W

----- 013206

P 142039Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3970

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE PRIORITY

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE CARACAS 8598

PARIS FOR UNESCO; DEPT PASS USIA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SOPN, UNESCO, VE

SUBJECT: PEREZ STANDS FIRM ON FLOW OF INFORMATION ISSUE

REF: CARACAS 8464

1. PRESIDENT CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ DEFENDED THE GOV'S POSITION AT THE SAN JOSE UNESCO COMMUNICATIONS CONFERENCE IN A STRONGLY WORDED TELEGRAM JULY 13 TO THE CONFERENCE PRESIDENT, COSTA RICAN FOREIGN MINISTER GONZALO FACIO. STATING THAT THE GOV CAN NO LONGER DUCK THE DISCUSSION OF A MATTER VITAL TO LATIN AMERICA AND THE DEVELOPING NATIONS, PEREZ SAID, "OUR COUNTRIES ARE BEING SUBJECTED TO AN UNCONTROLLED INVASION OF NEWS THAT INCULCATES IN OUR MASSES FOREIGN VALUES WHICH THREATEN OUR OWN NATIONAL IDENTITY." PEREZ MAINTAINED THAT INTERNATIONAL REGULATION OF COMMUNICATIONS WOULD "GUARANTEE THE SACRED RIGHT TO TRUTHFUL INFORMATION AND SAFEGARD THE UNRESTRICTED RIGHT TO OPINION." HE ADDED THAT THE "COMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY CANNOT PREVAIL OVER PUBLIC AND SOCIAL ORDER" AND THAT "INTERNATIONAL REGULATION WOULD BE A DEFENSIVE INSTRUMENT AGAINST THREATS OR AGGRESSIONS TO THIS FUNDAMENTAL LIBERTY, WHICH SHOULD NOT BE AT THE MERCY OF GOVERNMENTS, NATIONAL OR INTERNATIONAL CAPITAL, OR ASSOCIATIONS."

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2. CONTINUING, PEREZ SAID, "IT IS A FALLACIOUS CONCEPT OF FREEDOM OF INFORMATION TO LEAVE THE ABSOLUTE DECISION REGARDING INFORMATION DISTRIBUTION IN THE HANDS OF TRANSNATIONAL NEWS COMPANIES." PEREZ CLAIMED THAT THE "INTERNATIONAL PRESS ONLY COLLECTS INFORMATION DAMAGING TO THE IMAGE OF OUR PEOPLE AND THE LARGE PRESS AND AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA OF THE INDUSTRIALIZED WORLD IGNORE OUR STRUGGLES, OUR EFFORTS, AND OUR JUST DEMANDS FOR A SYSTEM OF INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE." "LATIN AMERICA," HE ADDED, "HAS THE RIGHT TO DEMAND ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS SPECTRUM. TO DENY TO UNESCO AND ITS MEMBER NATIONS DISCUSSION OF THIS MATTER WOULD BE TO RESTRICT THE SAME FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION THAT THE ORGANS OF IAPA ARE SO ARDUOUSLY DEFENDING." IN CONCLUSION PEREZ STATED, "TO DISCREDIT UNESCO, ABUSING ITS OVERWHELMING CAPACITY TO DISSEMINATE INFORMATION, WILL ACHIEVE NOTHING BUT IRREPARABLE HARM TO HUMANITY'S EFFORTS FOR PEACE, AND MATERIAL AND SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING."

3. COMMENT: PEREZ'S TELEGRAM IS CLEARLY A REPLY TO THE SHARP CRITICISM LEVELED AT HIM IN SAN JOSE ON JULY 12 BY GERMAN ORNES, CHAIRMAN OF IAPA'S FREEDOM OF THE PRESS COMMITTEE. PEREZ'S STATEMENT INDICATES THAT THE GOV CONTINUES TO FAVOR SOME FORM OF INTERNATIONAL REGULATION OF THE FLOW OF INFORMATION. HOWEVER, PEREZ'S MAIN BEEF SEEMS TO BE THE LIMITED COVERAGE GIVEN TO LATIN AMERICA IN THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS, A CONCERN HE HAS EXPRESSED ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS PREVIOUSLY. ASECIO

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: THE PRESS, INFORMATION CONTROL, SPEECHES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 JUL 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976CARACA08598
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760271-0385
From: CARACAS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760761/aaaacbdr.tel
Line Count: 88
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 CARACAS 8464
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 APR 2004 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <13 SEP 2004 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PEREZ STANDS FIRM ON FLOW OF INFORMATION ISSUE
TAGS: PFOR, SOPN, VE, UNESCO, (PEREZ, CARLOS ANDRES)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006